

“And the Word Increased”  
Acts 6:1-7  
(Preached at Trinity, March 23, 2005)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As this chapter opened we found a source of division within the church. The Grecian faction in the church was complaining that their widows were receiving equal attention in the daily provision.
  - A. The apostles were faced with a decision
    1. They could have dealt with the problem themselves  
They had the authority
    2. They could have personally been present for the daily food serving to assure fairness and equity in the distribution
    3. Such hands on involvement, however, would have distracted them from prayer and the ministry of the Word  
They maintained the priority of prayer and preaching
  - B. The Apostles knew the nature of their divine calling  
**Acts 6:2** – “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.”  
**Acts 6:4** – “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”
  - C. One called to this work must make it his primary focus. The apostles found themselves in a dilemma, but they also had the wisdom for the solution – the God ordained office of deacon.
2. We can see in this passage the primary purpose for the deacons.
  - A. The name implies the nature of the office – The deacon has been given the gift of service  
In **Romans 12:6-8** we find several of the spiritual gifts – We find in **Verse 7** we find the gift of service - διακονία – The deacon should have this gift of service
    1. The early deacons were given the responsibility of going from house to house caring for the daily needs of the widows. The church would have consisted of several thousand people by this time. It was hard work.
    2. The deacons today still continue in service. They have responsibility for the many practical matters that arise in the church. The care of the buildings fall to them. The comfort of the congregation during worship falls to them.
  - B. The primary purpose of the deacons is to aid in guarding the Pastor's time that he will be able to spend time in prayer and study. Pastors have the care of souls. This responsibility demands much time in prayer. It also demands a careful study of the Word of God that it might be applied properly to the soul.

1. Without the proper exposition of the Word of God the souls of the elect are deprived of life sustaining nourishment.
2. Without the proper exposition of the Word of God the souls of the lost continue to be entombed in the prison of death.
3. **Verse 7** describe the result when the offices of the church function in the God ordained manner; when the deacons are giving themselves to service and the Pastors are giving themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.
4. The “Word of God increased”
  - A. There are two ways we can look at God’s Word being increased
    1. The Word is effectually applied to the lost resulting in salvations
    2. The Word is effectually applied to the hearts of believers resulting in increase of faith and of holiness.
  - B. The former is implied here
    1. God sends His Word out and it accomplishes His purpose
    2. The number of believers is increased
  - C. The presupposition here is that the Ministers of the Gospel must be faithful to their duty in delivering God’s Word  
**Romans 10:13-15** – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

- I. First, we see here the necessity of the Word of God in Salvation
  - A. No man can be saved apart from the Word of God
    1. The Word of God is God’s means of imparting faith to the sinner  
**Romans 10:17** – “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”  
**1 Thessalonians 2:13** – “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”
    2. Spurgeon’s Catechism
      - Q71. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of redemption?
        - A. The outward and ordinary means, whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of Christ’s redemption, are the Word, by which souls are begotten unto spiritual life, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, Prayer, and Meditation, by all of which believers are further edified in their most holy faith.
      - Q72. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?
        - A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort,<sup>2</sup> through faith unto salvation.

Q73. How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

- A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith, and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.
- B. Saving Faith demands knowledge – (Notitia)  
**1 Timothy 2:4** – "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."  
**1 Corinthians 15:1-3** – "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
1. The Bible is the only source of knowledge unto salvation – God's appointed means
  2. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus describes the Word as the seed which the sower sows to the saving of the soul  
**Matthew 13:23** – "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."
  3. When the religious leader asked Jesus concerning eternal salvation Jesus pointed him to the Bible  
**Luke 10:25-26** – "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?"
- C. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to humanity
1. We cannot know God apart from His Word.
  2. The Bible contains God's Law and the demand for obedience  
 We cannot know sin apart from the law  
**Romans 3:20** – "...for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin."  
**Romans 7:8** – "...For without the law sin was dead."
  3. The Bible contains God's revelation of the Gospel of Christ  
**Romans 1:16** – "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."  
    - a. The Bible sets forth the conditions for salvation
    - b. It describes our sinfulness
    - c. The Bible reveals Christ  
**John 5:39** – "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."
    - d. The Bible describes the nature of the atonement
    - e. The Bible teaches God's demand for faith and repentance

- D. This knowledge must be imparted to the lost and received by the sinner  
This can occur in various ways
1. The Word Preached to the ears of the lost  
**Romans 10:13-14** – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”  
**1 Corinthians 1:21** – “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”
  2. The message of the Gospel may also surely be read  
**John 20:31** – “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
    - a. Directly from the Bible
    - b. Books that present the gospel
    - c. Tracts that present the gospel

II. This points to the Power of God as He applies His Word  
God uses His Word powerfully and effectually

- A. The Word of God has the power to cut through the heart of the most hardened sinner - God can save even the worse skeptic and scoffer  
**Hebrews 4:12** – “For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
1. Luke records for us here:  
“and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”
  2. God makes the preaching of the Word effectual  
**1 Thessalonians 1:5-6** – “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”
  3. God applies and impresses His Word upon the heart of the sinner  
**James 1:21** – “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
    - a. The word "engrafted" means to implant. God has implanted His Word upon our hearts.  
**Jeremiah 31:33** – “But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
    - b. It is like a horticulturalist making a graft upon a plant. The two grow together and becomes one.

- B. The Holy Spirit takes the Word and illuminates our minds enabling us to perceive and comprehend the spiritual truths of the Word of God
1. The Bible is perspicuous (i.e. clearness of expression or style)
    - the Bible can be understood. The Bible is a plain book. It is intelligible by the common man.
  2. The Bible cannot be known or understood by the natural man. He is incapable of discerning spiritual truths without the help of the Holy Spirit.
    1. It isn't just knowing the Word. It demands a new heart
    2. This is clearly seen in the case of Lydia
 

**Acts 16:14** – “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”
    3. The greatest power in all the universe accompanies God's Word effectually as the Holy Spirit opens the dead hearts of sinners and applies to them the atoning sacrifice of Christ enabling them to receive the good news of the Gospel
- III. This points to the Purpose of God as He applies His Word  
The Word increased according to the Purpose of God
- A. God will perfectly accomplish His purpose by His Word
- Isaiah 55:10-11** – “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.”
1. God has chosen a multitude of people unto salvation
  2. Not a single one will be lost
 

**John 6:37** – “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”
- B. God's will will be accomplished
- James 1:18** – “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.
1. Why did these priests believe when most continued to hate Christ and His Gospel
  2. Why did you believe when most around us will not  
Isaac Watts:  
“Why was I made to hear thy voice, and enter while there's room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come?”

Conclusion:

1. This is the Word of God. It will be successful in saving God's people.  
**1 Peter 1:24-25** – “For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
2. In God's Word is the hope of humanity. This is why we must continue to proclaim it. This is why I must continue to make prayer and the ministry of the Word the emphasis of my ministry. This is why our church must continue to hold God's Word with reverence, obedience, and trust.